

Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 PM-03

CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 EUR-10 IO-03

L-02 DPW-01 NIC-01 PRS-01 RSR-01 INRE-00 ACDA-10 /080 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8844

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

USDEL FRANCE IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRNAG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

S E C R E T SAIGON 4464

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A 4)

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT VIET- NAM CEASE- FIRE OVERVIEW - MARCH 19, 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. THE SEVENTH CEASE- FIRE WEEK WAS MARKED BY
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CONTINUING PROGRESS ON THE RELEASE OF BOTH US AND VIETNAMESE POWS,
WITH THE LIKELIHOOD THAT ALL SCHEDULED RELEASES COULD BE COMPLETED

BY X PLUS 60. OTHERWISE, THERE WAS LITTLE MOVEMENT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY OR IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE AGREEMENT. OF PARTICULAR NOTE, WAS THE VISIT BY CANADIAN EX-AMINISTER SHARP TO EVALUATE THE CANADIAN ROLE IN THE ICCS. WHILE RELATIVE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE REMAINED ON A PLATEAU, INTELLIGENCE REPORTS OF NVA INFILTRATION AND THREATENING VC/ NVA BUILDUPS AND INTENTIONS TO RENEW PRESSURE BODED ILL FOR THE FUTURE. THREATENED AREAS INCLUDED AREA WEST OF HUE, THE SA HUYNH AREA IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE AND, ESPECIALLY, NORTHERN BINH DUONG WHERE VC/ NVA PRESSURE ON THE IRON TRIANGLE INCREASED. THE LATTER, OWING TO THE PROXIMITY OF SAIGON, MAY WELL PROMPT A GVN RESPONSE WITH SUBSEQUENT INCREASES IN THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE.

2. THIS WEEK FOUND LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY. THE ICCS, UNDER HUNGARIAN CHAIRMANSHIP, HAS HELD NO PLENARIES SINCE MARCH 13. SOME FIELD INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUE TO BE INITIATED OR PURSUED BUT NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF WHETHER THE FINAL ACTION ON AN ICCS REPORT CAN BE BLOCKED BY THE PRG THROUGH ITS NON- PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION. IT WAS ON THIS GROUND THAT THE COMMUNIST DELS PREVIOUSLY HAD BLOCKED ICCS ACTION IN FORWARDING TO THE FPJMC THE UNANIMOUS FIELD REPORT OF THE SA HUYNH INVESTIGATION. SOME CONCERN AMONG CANDEL PERSONNEL HAS BEEN SURFACING THAT POLARIZATION BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND NO- COMMUNIST DELS IS ALREADY TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE ICCS. FURTHER, WHILE IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE ICCS ACTS ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT IT WILL NOT GET BETWEEN OPPOSING FORCES IN A COMBAT SITUATION, IT IS, NEVERTHELESS, DISCOURAGING THAT THE ICCS FINDS ITSELF UNABLE TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE, AT ALL, IN A SITUATION SUCH AS THAT WHICH PRESENTLY OBTAINS IN BINH DUONG. THERE, THE ICCS TEAM HAS FREQUENTLY OBSERVED HOSTILE FIRE DIRECTED AT GVN INSTALLATIONS, THEN RETURNING TO ITS CAMP WITHOUT FURTHER ACTION. PRESUMABLY THE EXCUSE FOR INACTION IS THE POLDEL REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE BECAUSE THE TEAM IS NOT LIVING AT BEN CAT. (TEAM COMMUTES FROM LAM SON. ONLY IN PAST DAY OR SO HAVE POLES JOINED TEAM AT LAM SON.)

3. THE DRV ELEMENT OF THE FPJMC HAS ALREADY BEGUN ITS DEPLOYMENT BACK TO HANOI (ABOUT 100 PERSONNEL TO DATE), THUS MAKING UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL REDEPLOY ANY PERSONNEL TO C- F REGIONS I (HUE) AND II (DANANG), FROM WHICH IT HAD PREVIOUSLY WITHDRAWN AFTER ITS DELS WERE STONED BY DEMONSTRATORS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO IN LIGHT OF RENEWED VIOLENCE ON MARCH 15 AGAINST

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A DRV REPRESENTATIVE ON THE DUC PHO INVESTIGATING TEAM WHO SUFFERED A SLIGHT CONCUSSION. THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER DEPLOYMENT OF PRG ELEMENTS TO THE FPJMC AND NO APPARENT NEW PROGRESS IN THE TWO PARTY TALKS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TPJMC, THOUGH THE PARTIES CONTINUE TO MEET ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES. FIELD REPORTS INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT MANY GVN OFFICIALS EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE A LAST MINUTE DEPLOYMENT OF PRG PERSONNEL TO THE FIELD. SUCH EXPECTATIONS MAY BE A REFLECTION OF GVN FEARS THAT IMPORTANT POLITICAL ADVANTAGES WOULD ACCRUE TO THE

PRG THROUGH SUCH DEPLOYMENT. PRESUMABLY, IF THE PRG SIMILARLY ASSESSES THE SITUATION, SUCH DEPLOYMENT WILL TAKE PLACE BUT, UNDER THE CONDITIONS SO FAR IMPOSED BY THE GVN UPON THE ACTIVITIES OF PRG MEMBERS OF THE FPJMC AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE PRG COULD, IN FACT, EXPLOIT ITS PRESENCE LOCALLY IN A SIGNIFICANT FASHION. ALTERNATIVELY, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE MIGHT SEE THE PRG HOLDING FIRM IN ITS PRESENT DEPLOYMENT, NEITHER WITHDRAWING NOR FURTHER DEPLOYING UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE PARIS BILATERAL TALKS, TO BEGIN MARCH 19, CAN BE MORE CLEARLY FORESEEN.

4. CANADIAN EXTAFF MINISTER SHARP VISITED VIET- NAM MARCH 15 TO 17 TO EVALUATE THE CANDEL ROLE IN THE ICCS. SHARP SAW GVN FONMIN LAM AND PRESIDENT THIEU; HELD AN HISTORIC RECEPTION, ATTENDED BY REPS OF ALL FOUR PARTIES, AND VISITED THE MOST ACTIVE ICCS REGIONAL HQ AT C- F REGION VII (CAN THO). WHILE WE CANNOT PREDICT OUTCOME OF SHARP' S VISIT, HIS DEPARTURE STATEMENTS WERE BALANCED. HE NOTED THE DIFFICULTIES CREATED FOR THE ICCS BY THE FAILURE OF THE FPJMC TO PERFORM WELL; SAID, " OUR DIFFICULTY IS TO CARRY OUT THE TASK ASSIGNED US AS A MEMBER OF THE ICCS", BUT NOTED IT WAS CLEAR THAT " SO FAR, EVERYONE WANTS US TO STAY."
 5. POW RELEASE CONTINUED AND DESPITE MINOR CONTRETEMPS ON THE GROUND, PROCEEDED AT A RATE WHICH, BARRING NEW UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS, COULD SEE ALL SCHEDULED RELEASES COMPLETED BY X PLUS 60. PLASE III RELEASES OF US POW' S WERE 134 MILITARY AND 6 CIVILIAN FOR TOTAL RELEASE TO DATE OF 439.
 6. WHILE THE GENERAL LEVEL OF VIOLENCE HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY THIS WEEK, ON OF THE MOST DISTURBING DEVELOPMENTS OF THE SEVENTH CEASE- FIRE WEEK WAS CONTINUED REPORTS OF MAJOR INFILTRATION BY NVA ELEMENTS WHICH WAS CLEARLY BEGINNING TO PLAY A MAJOR PART IN GVN EVALUATIONS. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS CONTINUED TO INDICATE A BUILDUP IN COMMUNIST FORCES WEST OF HUE AND CONTINUING VC/ NVA DETERMINATION TO RETAKE SA HUYNH IN SOUTHERN QUANG
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NGAI. FOR EVEN GREATER CONCERN WAS THE BUILDUP OF VC/ NVA PRESSURE IN THE BEN CAT AREA IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE WITH REGULAR SHELLINGS OF BEN CAT AND RACH BAP AS THE VC/ NVA ATTEMPT TO RE- ENTER THE IRON TRIANGLE AREA ASTRIDE THE MAIN INFILTRATION ROUTE TO SAIGON. REGARDLESS OF VC/ NVA INTENTIONS, THIS DEVELOPMENT ILLUSTRATES THE DIFFICULTY OF ACHIEVING A TRUE CEASE- FIRE. AS ENEMY PRESSURE BUILDS, THE GVN FALLS UNDER INCREASING NECESSITY TO RELIEVE THAT PRESSURE. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON MARCH 19 INDICATE THAT JGS HAS ORDERED CORPS COMMANDERS TO COUNTER ATTACK VIGOROUSLY AGAINST VC/ NVA VIOLATIONS AND TO ATTACK WHERE NECESSARY TO PREVENT ENEMY VICTORIES. THIS DIRECTIVE, WHICH TENDS TO PARTIALLY CANCEL OUT PREVIOUS RESTRAINING ORDERS ON THE ARVN, IS PROBABLY IN REACTION TO CONTINUING REPORTS OF ENEMY INFILTRATION AND TO THE INCREASED ENEMY PRESSURES.

7. AT THE SAME TIME THERE ARE PERCEPTIBLE, IF TENTATIVE, SIGNS THAT BOTH SIDES ARE PREPARING FOR POLITICAL STRUGGLE. THE VC/ NVA

BUILD SHADOW HAMLETS IN THEIR AREAS TO CONTROL, FOR WHICH THEY PROSELYTIZE OR ABDUCT NEW SETTLERS. THE GVN PREPARES FOR VIL-LAGE ELECTIONS IN SOME AREAS AND THE INAUGURATION OF THE SAIGON CHAPTER OF THE DEMOCRACY PARTY WAS HELD ON MARCH 17.
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